

kangaroos seen. This gives a mean of 13.0 kangaroos per square mile. The evening counts were by far the larger, the maximum being 28, whereas the greatest number seen on a morning count was only 7.

I examined 20 kangaroos which had been killed by various means and found that 16, or 80%, were females, all with young in the pouch—these were furred after July. Twelve of the animals, or 60%, were infested with a parasitic nematode in the connective tissues of the hind legs, mainly around the knee joints.

A close watch was kept for smaller mammals, possums, etc. Very few Brush (*Macropus irma*) were seen and although the party included some first-class bushmen, there was a complete absence of reports of other marsupials.

## SOME NOTES ON THE LACE-WING

(*Acmonotus magnus*)

By WALLACE H. MATHEWS, South Perth

*Acmonotus magnus* is one of our most handsome Lace-wings and is a member of the Superfamily Myrmeleontoidea and of the family Ascalapidae. Dr. R. J. Tillyard says of them: "These beautiful insects are perhaps the most highly developed of all the Planipennia, they are diurnal insects, and like their analogues, the Butterflies, have developed long, knobbed antennae. They generally rest with wings drooping obliquely below the abdomen. Their hard oval eggs are laid transversely in masses around twigs or grass stalks, 50-100 together, and are frequently met with in the bush. The larva differs from true ant-lions in having much larger heads and jaws, the body is thick but more or less flattened above and the lateral processes are well developed, they hide away under debris. The cocoon is spherical but disguised by having bits of debris, leaves, etc., spun in with the silk." The males of this species have two raised conical processes dorsally on the second abdominal segment, from which they exude a volatile substance having the aroma of crushed wattle pods.

Their habitat is Australia generally, but they are absent from Tasmania and New Zealand.

Around Perth they are generally found from November to February, and may be observed at dusk hawking around telegraph or light poles for mosquitoes and other insects. An individual insect will remain in the one particular spot for several evenings. I have caught one and marked it, and then released it about 150 yards from its original position, and in a few minutes it was back on its old beat. I have repeated this as many as six times in the one evening, and always with the same result.

The larva does not make a pit but moves backwards just beneath the surface of the ground, with jaws and eyes exposed, and secures its prey in this way. Like all the Ant-lions it has no

functional vent and therefore during the two or three years of its life in this form it passes no excrement, but this is found in a pocket in the rear of the cast skin after it has pupated.

It should be remembered that, whether in larval form or fully developed, these are useful insects and claim not only our protection but our admiration also.



Adult and larva of the Lace-wing (*Acanthosoma majuscula*).

Photos: Wallace H. Mathews

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Flowering of the Blackboy.**—With the approach of spring, the outskirts of Perth present annually a characteristically Australian scene in the myriad green flower spikes of the Underground Blackboy (*Xanthorrhoea gracilis* Endl.). Who has not observed these spearlike growths—rank after rank as though an army of native warriors crouched hidden in the undergrowth.

Later the scene changes with the appearance of the tiny cream-white blossoms which stud the green spearhead to its junction with its shaft and the effect is now that of innumerable candles but awaiting the taper. The profusion and regularity of this growth leads the casual observer to assume automatically that each year